

THE EMERGENCE OF ORGANIZATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION

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Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, and Robichaud (1996) theorize that an organization is created entirely through the interpretations of its members and it evolves as those conversations change. Demonstrating the Taylor et al. theory, the current study focuses on the outcomes of management vision and strategic planning sessions in a division of a large Southwestern University. It explores the ways organization emerges through the discourse of the managers, how text is amplified to support the organization as a whole, the ways organization continues to emerge in communication, and in what ways the emergent view of organization exists throughout the division.

The results of the study support the Taylor et al. theory. Management participants created an expanded view of the organization through discourse and then linked it to the university as a whole. Evidence was found supporting continued reformulation but it was limited to the management participants and did not include hourly employees.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

When we think of organizations, we think of company names, buildings, addresses, letterheads, products and services, and perhaps the people that fill positions in organizational charts. Cooren and Taylor (1997) propose this view of organizations is “...a fiction not a fact” (p. 254). They state that while all of these artifacts provide convincing evidence organizations exist, none of them call an organization into being. Simply put, Cooren and Taylor believe these things do not create an organization. If we adopt their view and accept that how we traditionally have defined organizations is a fiction, how should we conceptualize organizations?

Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, and Robichaud (1996) theorize that an organization is constructed entirely through the interpretations of its members. They believe those interpretations should not be seen “...as isolated images, but as parts of an ongoing negotiation of perspectives on the basis of which a more or less agreed-upon account might finally be produced” (p. 3). They further note that if a consensus of interpretations were to be found among the members of the organization it would be tentative. Each interpretation would be subject to ongoing revision based on new contexts of communication.

In summary, Taylor et al. are contending that an organization is created by the

conversations of its members and that it evolves as those conversations change. Their theory builds on the work of Karl Weick (1969) and Leonard Hawes (1974) who view organizations as social collectives capable of creating their reality.

Weick (1969) offers an organization model rooted in the enactment of change and based on information that has some degree of equivocality. The information referred to is ambiguous and raises the uncertainty of the members of the organization. In Weick's model, the members select an interpretation that reduces the ambiguity and also helps retain the causal relationships created by their interpretation. Weick sees the process as the essence of organizing. As a communication scholar interpreting Weick's theory, Hawes' (1974) review asserts that communicative behavior should be observed to determine how organizations come into existence, how patterned behavior evolves, how collectives maintain themselves, and how they disengage. Weick opened the door and Hawes moved communication scholars to the threshold of seeing communication not as something done in an organization, but rather as what actually constitutes an organization.

Statement of the Problem

The Taylor et al. (1996) theory does more than propose a new relationship between organization and communication. Their approach also promotes a needed evolution in the basic inquiries of organizational communication scholars. Poole (1994) states that as recently as a few years ago a general volume on organizational communication would resemble organizational management texts, having chapters on superior-subordinate communication, communication climate, communication networks, leadership, feedback,

and similar topics, implying that the field of communication studies remains loyal to its roots. Even today, one only needs to perform a cursory search of the literature to validate Poole's assertion. King, in King and Cushman (1994), shares Poole's concern. She contends that textbooks on organizational communication look very much like textbooks on management and "...until recently, the search for unique communication principles capable of yielding significant cross-organizational generalizations has been rather barren" (p. 1).

As an organizational communication scholar, Redding (1999) offers a more pointed criticism of communication research. He cites concerns over research that is second-rate, trivial, derivative, unimaginative, biased, or downright incompetent. Much of it in his view is conducted in a vacuum ignoring other studies and other variables. Redding also notes the historical bias in the field toward problems and issues originated by management. Finally, Redding cites a "call to arms" issued by Wartella (1992) as she expressed concern for public issues that call for reasoned discussion and informed communication scholarship. Wartella states "...too often communication research is either not mentioned in the discussion, is irrelevant, or uninformative, or all three" (p.5).

King, in King and Cushman (1994), argues that, to date, communication has been relegated to a second-level support activity in organizations. Issues of manufacturing, production, and innovation have been the primary focus of organizational strategy for several years. For example, in the last decade many organizational strategies were based on reducing product costs and process improvement. Studying the role communication plays in these and other management issues is important. However, those efforts are not

likely to yield the broader insights King, Poole, and Redding see as lacking in the field.

King further notes recent environmental volatility has moved organizations toward what she calls high-speed management. According to King, "...high-speed management employs communication principles and information technology in creating a rapid response system that is innovative, adaptive, flexible, and efficient" (p. 2). King states that, because of global market changes and demands, communication functions are now becoming the primary cross-organizational theoretic activity. Taylor (2000) supports King's concern about the effects of change. Taylor agrees globalization is transforming organizations asserting that we are in the midst of a radical transformation of organizational structure and process. To illustrate his position, Taylor cites one example of an individual who started a bookselling business out of a spare bedroom in his home. In less than a year it grew to rival the Internet giants Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. He also refers to a doctoral dissertation based on the analysis of a "virtual" film and video production company that runs out of one woman's pocket. She operates her company without the extensive facilities and equipment traditionally required by similar enterprises relying instead on minimal high tech solutions. He also reports on the efforts of a team of highly specialized international consultants whose internal conversations occur entirely via electronic media. Each of these examples represents a dramatic departure from the established organization archetypes typical from the mid-nineteenth century to recent years. Changes in structure and the rapid emergence of organizations on such a global scale are significant to the field of organizational communication. Taylor cautions, "if communication scholars are not simply to be

overtaken by events it becomes crucial for us to understand *how* organization emerges in communication” (p.3).

The theory proposed by Taylor and his colleagues offers an original exploration into the way in which people construct organizations through communicative acts. They propose both the creation of meaning through communication and the outcome itself are dynamic. They further argue communication is as variable as those individuals who create it. Based on unique communication principles Taylor’s theory is a serious attempt to capture broader insights into the creation and recreation of organizations.

Taylor et al. (1996) present a theory where the organization actually emerges in the communication of its members in two ways. First, the members of the organization arrive at a more or less shared understanding. Secondly, a dynamic playing out of relationships occurs as they negotiate identities and roles. In their theory, an organization is not an objective or fixed thing. Instead, the organization is born and continually recreated in the varied communication of its members. The proposed view contends organization emerges through communication.

In their theory, Taylor et al. (1996) adopt a view of the communication process as a double translation, from text-to-conversation and then conversation-to-text (see Figure 1). In the first translation, the text is what is said, or the content of the conversation. In a face-to-face speech situation, the content is supported by voice, gestures, and body language. Alternative support may include paper, marker boards, flip charts, projected images, or even computers. Text becomes text the moment that it is said or produced. Austin (1962) refers to these utterances in language as locutions. Before text is produced

it is just an idea.

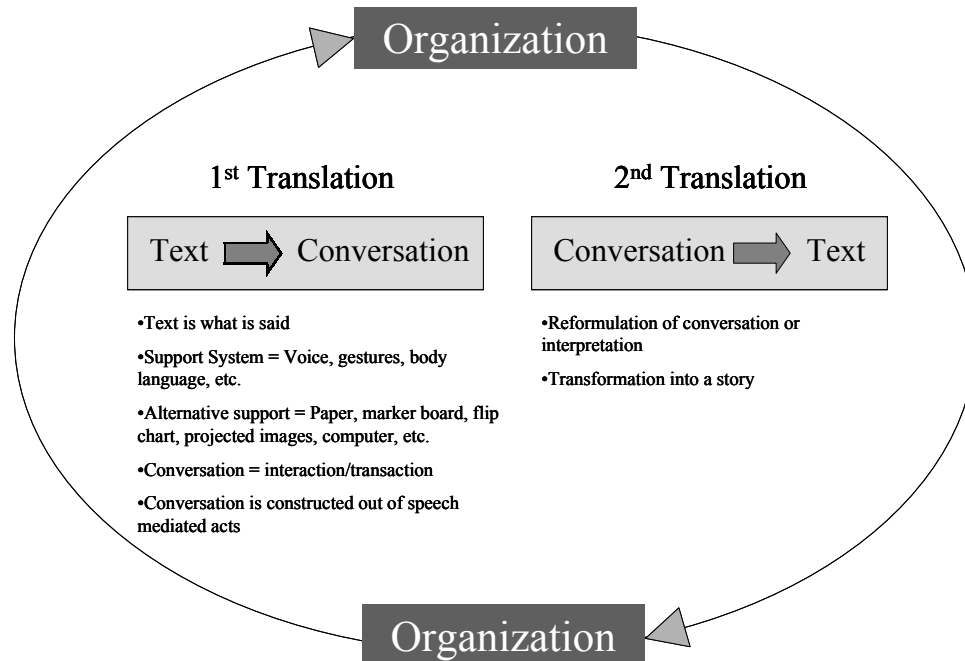


Figure 1.1. Graphic Representation of the Double Translation Concept presented by Taylor et al. (1996).

Understanding the meaning of each communication event requires interpretation. Interpretation includes the situation in which the transaction occurs as well as the assumption of intention. Who is doing the speaking and where they are speaking constitutes the situation. The intention behind statements includes the presumed state of mind of the person speaking. In the model proposed by Taylor et al. (1996), the organization may itself function as an actor, a source of intention. During the interpretation process, the assumption of intention by both the speaker and the hearer turns Austin's (1962) locutions into illocutions, which are actions. Taylor et al. argue that

organizing takes place in the illocutionary manifestations of speech. They further propose it is what turns text into conversation giving it communicative force.

Through the interpretation and subsequent reformulation of conversation, in the model's second translation, participants generate new ideas and ultimately new text. The text conversion cycle illustrates the complex process of organizational members interacting and communicating with each other. Within these interactions, Taylor et al. (1996) argue that mediation is best described using the concept of agency. As they view it, mediation can be seen as a speaker (first agent) calling on the resource of language (second agent) with the text (third agent) emerging from the fusion of the first two. Out of these interactions, organization emerges.

The Taylor et al. theory is as robust as it is original. It has the ability to take in an entire range of persons, within situations, in sets of transactional relationships, which are all mediated by interaction. The resulting effect has to be organized through communication to happen. Therefore organization emerges through communication.

According to Taylor et al. (1996), the organization itself is a potentiality, a repository of multiple meanings. The idea of organization as a dynamic potentiality is also found in the work of Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), Weick (1979), and Mintzberg (1979). Organization is a result of a mediating process a construction of text generated in communication. The Taylor et al. position is that organizational communication is not just information; it is action in context. The context created through communication becomes the organizational frame. Demonstrating text generation and the creation of context through mediation is one objective of the current study.

Cooren and Taylor (1997) propose that seeing organization and communication as two poles, or even as co-producers, is a waste of effort. Their position is the same one held by Smith (1993) when she maintains that scholars may want to abandon the idea of attempting to understand organizational communication from the organization/communication relationship. She believes the nature of the relationship is secondary to actually grasping the unity of organizational communication.

Taylor et al. (1996) and Cooren and Taylor (1997) assert organization, as an entity, should be conceptualized as a *text*. It is the product of language mediation in which both the subjects and the objects of organization are linked by a texted construction (including speech) that they jointly produce, and are produced by. Both present communication as an instance of mediation. Communication as mediation has organizing, not organizational properties. They assert that, “organization” is merely a result of the mediating process; a construction of text generated in communication.

Cooren and Taylor (1997) propose two significant steps that would demonstrate the mediation, which produces both communication and organization. The first step involves showing how organization emerges through discourse. The second step demonstrates how mediation links organizational conversations to the organizing properties of the network in which they figure. In the latter, they focus on actor-network theory, or the sociology of translation (Callon, 1986; Callon, Law & Rip, 1986; Latour & Woolgar, 1979; 1986; Law, 1986). The challenge, as they see it, is to demonstrate how something that originates in conversational dynamics is amplified to support the organization as a whole.

The two papers by Taylor and his colleagues offer an evolution in the way we view organization and communication. There is a unique communication principle capable of yielding significant cross-organizational generalizations. They propose a theory with great potential but they do not attempt to demonstrate or test their theory. Therefore, a gap exists between concept and research that must be addressed for the theory to achieve its full promise. The alternative lies in the irrelevance of communication research, which concerns Wartella (1992). One purpose of the present study is to provide a demonstration of the two steps outlined in Cooren and Taylor (1997), illustrating the emergence of organization in discourse and the linking of conversation to the organizing properties of the network. The second objective is to examine the reoccurring nature and reach of the theory.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are instrumental to the understanding of the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) and Cooren and Taylor (1997). They also serve as central points of development in the current study.

Agent. Organizations always speak through an agent, a person or entity accorded the credibility to speak for the organization. In principle, every member of an organization potentially could act as an agent. Credibility is afforded through a process known as sanctioning (Greimas, 1987). Sanctioning occurs when enough others accept an agent's performance as legitimate in conversation.

Mediation. Mediation involves the creation of an agent or agency through the process of translating some subject's action (including speech acts) into material form

(object). Properties of that object may be instrumental in making contributions to how the agency works in practice.

Locution. Locutions are utterances formulated in the speech code we call language.

Illocution. Illocution is the action in speech. In the illocutionary view, part of the meaning comes from who is doing the speaking and where. What turns a locution into an illocution, and translates text into conversation, is the assumption of intention both on the part of the speaker and the hearer.

Perlocutionary Effect. Perlocutionary effect is what one actually achieves in acting through speech, including behavioral or attitudinal effects.

Conventional Procedure. Conventional procedure is a procedure that governs the interactive dynamics of an exchange.

Potentiality. An actual performance (or an actual state of affairs) exists as a potentiality before it exists in fact. Underlying any performance is the assumption of competence. It is that competence that can turn the potentiality into an actuality. Such competence, organizationally, is triggered by another person's communicative act (Greimas, 1987).

Vision Statement. A vision statement captures what the organization wants to be or become, declaring a desired future state.

Mission Statement. A mission statement is a compelling statement of what the organization's charge is and how it expects to accomplish it. Mission statements also address customers and customer satisfaction.

Core Values. Core values are the critical few values essential to the

accomplishment of the organization's mission and the fulfillment of the vision.

Key Result Areas. Key result areas are the critical few areas of action that must be kept in mind as the organization's mission is carried out.

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant to both the fields of organizational communication and management. Pilotta, Widman, and Jasko (1988) argue human beings are capable of not just altering their environments but also creating those environments. It is the position of Taylor et al. (1996) and the present study that communication creates the environment known as "organization." The significance of organizational communication is proposed by the early organizational scholar Chester Barnard (1938), who notes "communication should occupy a central place in any exhaustive theory of organization because the structure, extensiveness, and scope of the organization are almost entirely determined by communication techniques." While Barnard stops short of the position taken by Taylor et al., his implications are similar.

The differentiated structure of work and the integration of patterns of activity and beliefs are at the heart of management. In essence, they fulfill the two requirements for the structuring of an organization as stated by management theorist Mintzberg (1979), namely the division of labor and coordination of activity. The Taylor et al. (1996) theory draws upon the concept of modalization in Gremas (1987). Their concern with how to get many people, involved in many conversations, to do (modalization of performance) and think (modalization of the situation) in a way that produces a differentiated structure of work and an integrated pattern of activity and belief is of particular relevance to the field

of management.

At a minimum, any theory that has the potential to overcome the high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty inherent in the creation of organizations would be of tremendous value to both organizational communication and management scholars (Donnellon, Gray & Bougon, 1986; Eisenberg, 1984). If the practical application of the Taylor et al. theory results in an organizational declaration that affirms a specific reality, it would go a long way toward minimizing the uncertainty of collective endeavors (organizations).

Redding (1999) recommends the field of organizational communication engage in what he calls a concerted effort of “consciousness raising” about the issue of social significance. He is not suggesting that every study be “saturated” with social significance but he asserts that when we select a problem for investigation we must force ourselves to confront the question of social significance. The current study has social significance because people spend major portions of their lives as members of organizations.

The current study seeks to test a truly communicational theory that offers explanations of how organizations come to be and how they evolve. It suggests organizations exist in a world of text, which makes the organization recognizable, and a world of conversation that produces and renews that text and also the organization. It has the potential to bring some sense of cohesion to the fragmented body of research that makes up the science. The rapid emergence of organizations today requires a rethinking of traditional approaches to both communication and organization. The theory offered by Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study takes a significant step toward achieving that

goal.

Summary

Chapter one stated the problem and defined the terms to be used in the study. In addition, the significance of the study was presented. The subsequent chapter reviews the literature that relates to and supports the current study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter One stated the problem, the significance of the current study, and defined the terms used in the study. The current chapter reviews the literature that supports the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study. Following a review of the literature on organizational culture, attention is placed on the primary perspectives in organizational communication relevant to the current study. Finally, an overview of specific theories within the interpretive perspective and a review of network theory provide an understanding of how the interpretations of individuals influence the organization as a whole and how communication functions to create organizations.

Organizational Culture

How we conceptualize organizations is at the core of the current study, and the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) The shift toward seeing organizations as social collectives rather than machines provides the initial underpinnings of the Taylor et al. theory. The literature on organizational culture illustrates the movement that fostered the concepts promoted in the current study.

During the course of the last 30 years a transition has occurred in the way scholars view organizations and think about the roles of employees, managers and leaders. The primary shift is away from the mechanistic perceptions of organizations, which

dominated early scientific management. The focus on efficient working systems where individuals were replaceable small cogs in a large machine gave way in the 1970s to an approach where organizations are conceptualized as cultures. Gertz (1973) offers a definition of culture as an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols. Through these symbolic means, people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life including organizational life. Pettigrew (1979) includes concepts of symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual, and myth in the discussion of organizational culture, asserting that all play a significant role in the social construction of meaning. Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo (1982) propose that everything, which constitutes organizational life, constitutes the legitimate realm of inquiry. Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo adopt an approach consistent with the sense-making theory offered by Weick (1969), focusing on the selection and enactment of interpretations by members of organizations as part of their sense making process.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the academic study of organizational culture became popular. The term organizational culture entered into the language of organizational managers and is promoted in popular management books. One such book the best-selling In Search of Excellence by Peters and Waterman (1982), suggests the status of being an excellent company relies on the organization's ability to create a strong unifying culture with a shared vision.

Hawkins (1997) proposes meaning and understanding emerge in the dialogical relationship between at least two parties. Hawkin's position envisions culture as a frame for our meaning making, influencing our behavior, enacted in our rituals, and evolving

through shifts in verbal discourse. The idea of culture evolving through the dialogue of at least two parties promotes the interactive nature of culture. Bates (1994) conceptualizes culture not as a physical entity, but rather as an interactively produced complex social phenomenon.

Much of the literature on organizational culture focuses on the emergence of culture through the discourse of organization members as they interact and attempt to make sense of the world around them. Organizational culture research provides a strong base for the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study because in its simplest form it could be defined as “the way we do things around here” (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Organizational communication is a part of how people do things. Barnett (1988) specifically states that organizational culture is “an emergent property of the organizational members’ communication activities, which, in turn, acts to restrict future communication,” (p.101). From these perspectives, organizational communication plays a major role in shaping organizational culture and as a result the organization.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication’s early emphasis on organizational effectiveness is understandable in that the science was founded on the principles of scientific management. However, early attempts to correlate a multitude of elements in organizational communication to various indicators of organizational effectiveness produced a fragmented body of research (Dennis, Goldhaber, and Yates, 1978). The science lacked significant theories of organizational communication. Many scholars simply adapted traditional social science themes to the study of organizational

communication.

In a review of organizational communication literature, Smith (1993) found that scholars primarily conceptualized communication as being contained within the organization. Morgan (1986) also proposes that the field of organizational communication inherits theories of organization rooted in metaphor. Morgan states the prevalent metaphor is that of container (organization) to content (communication). Traditional organizational metaphors position the organization as the primary factor in the organization/communication relationship. Smith (1993) argues organization takes on the role of container within which communication is housed. Corman, Banks, Bantz, and Mayer (1990) cite a bias in Western culture toward thinking of organizations as some kind of “magical containers” holding resources, people, materials, products, and so on. In many respects it seems logical to adopt such a view; people certainly see themselves as working *within* organizations.

Putnam, Phillips, and Chapman (1996) build upon the work of Smith by offering seven root metaphors for the communication/organization relationship. Among them are the metaphors of communication as linkage, symbol, or voice. The linkage metaphor provides a basis for studying communication as the connector that links people together and constitutes organizations as networks of relationships. Symbol metaphors provide a context for studying the creation, maintenance, and transformation of meaning. Finally, in the voice metaphor communication becomes an inquiry into the expression or repression of the voices of organizational members. The use of metaphors provides a basis for more narrowly defined research, each metaphor providing a specific grounding

for the study of communication and organization. However, none of them embrace the complexity or breadth of organization or the ongoing activities that are accomplished through communication.

Corman, Banks, Bantz, and Mayer (1990) point to a significant shift in the early 1970s as organizational scholars began to view organizations as on going processes, rather than things or machines. The movement was away from message exchange/information theories proposed by early scholars. In these theories, communication is viewed as a machine-like process with simplistic views of senders and receivers. Hawes (1974) asserts organizations are not things. He treats organizations *as* communication. Hawes turns attention to the human activity of organizing, the everyday life of the members of the organization, the production of organization through dialogue. Weick (1976, 1979, 1988) continues to move functionalism from a focus on communication as purposive action within organizations, to a view of organizations as processes. From Weick's perspective, organizations are less like objects and more like dynamic potentialities.

Cronen, Pearce, and Harris (1982) define communication as "...a process through which persons create, maintain, and alter social order, relationships, and identities" (pp. 85-86). Cronen et al. propose communication is an ongoing process through which meaning is achieved. Heath (1994) also maintains the effect of communication is meaning, stating that people are the heart and soul of organizations and through communication and the creation of meaning they coordinate and focus their efforts. He holds the position organizations result from what people think and do, that in a sense,

what they do has communicative force. These approaches position organization as a product of communication. The organization is seen as a symbolically realized construction (Berg, 1985; Berger & Luckmann, 1967), the result of interpretive processes on the part of its members (Eisenberg, 1986). The focus in these approaches is on the creative nature of communication, a position attractive to communication scholars because it casts communication in the primary role of the organization/communication relationship.

Currently, the movement in organizational communication research is less positivist and more interpretive. Instead of seeking to identify countless communication and organizational variables, then explaining their relationships through statistical studies, interpretivists focus on the construction of meanings and the frames of reference from which members experience organizational life. Even though a transition is underway, a strong positivist grounding continues. Identification of variables and statistical analysis of narrowly defined communication behaviors is still a predominant approach to communication research. Danowski (1994) reports studies of organizational communication still tend to be “uniplex.” He points out that studies often concentrate on one technology, or one set of interactions. An example would be a study that seeks to explain the relationship between managers’ styles of communication and employee job satisfaction. Traditional researchers might first observe and measure managers’ communicative behaviors classifying each manager as either high or low in communication openness. The next step would involve measuring the levels of job satisfaction among each manager’s employees. Finally, statistical analysis would be

employed in an attempt to explain any relationship between the variables. Such an approach fails to describe adequately the fuller complexity of employee/manager relationships. It certainly fails to provide an overarching level of knowledge about the social collective.

An interpretivist might not even ask questions about variables like openness and satisfaction. Instead, one might ask participants in the study to relate stories or illustrations that describe their experiences with managers. An analysis of themes or categories of response that occur in the participant interviews would reveal the ways in which organization members socially construct an understanding of the experiences they share. If openness or job satisfaction were reoccurring themes, they might be indicators of how employees understand their relationships with managers. Smilowitz (1982) suggests that the interpretive objective is to reveal communication activities, which produce the unique character of the organization. From Smilowitz perspective, communication plays a significant role in organization.

In interpretive theories, communication is often as much about symbolic matters, ideas, beliefs, and assumptions as it is about information (Feldman & March, 1981). Interpretivists believe the words, symbols, and behaviors of the members of the organization socially construct reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Weeks, 1980).

The theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) is predominately interpretive in nature. It draws upon many of the tenets within the main interpretive paradigm including social construction, symbolic convergence, and symbolic interaction.

Social Construction

Researchers studying organizational change often argue that effective change requires members of an organization to alter the ways in which they understand and respond to organizational events (Bartunek & Moch, 1987; Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Poole, Gioia, & Gray, 1989). These scholars emphasize the social construction of meaning. Gray, Bougon, and Donnellon (1985) portray organizations as meaning systems involving a continuous process of construction, maintenance, and destruction of meaning through the communication of organizational members. It is social in that the meaning is occurring in the relatedness of the members (Gergen, 1991). Like other interpretive theories, social construction asserts the world is fundamentally social, linguistic, and historically constituted. From a social construction perspective, social reality is co-created and shaped by individuals through discourse. The text/conversation translations proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) are based in discourse.

The potency of the social construction perspective is easily demonstrated. Organizations striving to become quality-based often change the meaning of the word *customer* to include coworkers and other internal departments. That single change creates an entire new range of possibilities and activities. Activities and relationships that were exclusively associated with an external entity now include those within the organization. Concepts such as service to the customer, cross-functional teams, continuous improvement, and empowerment all take on new meaning. Accordingly, members of the organization create new meanings and in turn new relationships are formed. The outcome is a new organization that is constructed out of the discourse of its members.

Symbolic Convergence

Bormann (1983) contends symbolic convergence is symbolic because we interpret signs and objects by giving them meaning. It is convergent in the way two or more individuals' symbolic worlds move toward each other or even overlap. Cronen and Harris (1979) maintain symbolic convergence explains how we come to share enough symbolic ground to negotiate a co-orientation and to share common sentiment or emotional involvement and commitment to symbols.

The dynamic sharing of group fantasies (Bales, 1970; Bormann, 1975) best illustrates the communication process used by small groups engaged in symbolic convergence. Shared fantasies can cut across organizational structure, management levels, and primary group members to create a new community of people (Bormann, Pratt, & Putnam, 1978). Symbolic convergence often takes place in small groups. The group may be engaged in task-oriented or even social conversations. One member of the group uses dramatic imagery to tell a story where the characters enact a dramatic scenario. Others in the group get caught up in the story and start to participate. The mood of the gathering or meeting changes and more participants become committed and involved in the conversation. For Taylor et al. (1996), symbolic convergence occurs as the text generated by members of the organization is converted to conversation in these types of interactions. Within a symbolic convergence perspective, shared fantasies are the way social collectives make sense out of their experience and create their social reality. Using fantasy themes, individuals make a common experience understandable to the group and invest it with emotion.

When symbolic convergence occurs, members of the organization share similar attitudes, experience similar emotions, and adopt similar perspectives. They interpret some aspect of their experience in the same way. They achieve symbolic convergence about that common experience. For example, in organizations where leadership shares the larger picture with others, higher levels of commitment are achieved (Bormann, Howell, Nichols, & Shapiro, 1982). Bormann et al. found the process facilitates a co-orientation, emotional involvement, and shared commitment to that vision. Workers within these organizations adopt a common framework for activity. They achieve symbolic convergence.

Symbolic Interaction

Simply stated, the underlying principle in symbolic interaction is that society is interaction and interaction is symbolic because people assign meaning to it (Blummer, 1969; Mead, 1934). The importance of language in organizations has long been established. Mintzberg (1973) declares that managers devote between 57% and 89% of their time to verbal communication. From a symbolic interactionist perspective, language in organizations is not studied to uncover regularities in order to make predictions. The focus is on the attempt to understand statements made by individuals based on the specific interactive situation in which they occur (Cossette, 1998). Morgan (1985) stresses that situations must be studied from within. Examples of symbolic interactionist research in organizational communication include studies in giving orders and offering advice (Winograd, 1980), appraisal situations (Gioia, Donnellon, & Sims, 1994), and meaning and organized action (Donnellon, Gray, & Bougon, (1986). These are the

situations and interactions in which Taylor et al. (1996) assert organization is created. They see them as communicative events. Within these interactions, we come to understand and further develop our organizations and ourselves. Our dialogues become a dynamic reality shaped by events (situations), which, they in turn, help shape. They are not independent of the situational context in which they occur.

The current study utilizes vision and strategic planning sessions defined by Taylor et al. as conventional procedures. These events and the procedures employed govern the interactive dynamics of the member's exchanges. They provide a situational context for social interaction. In entrepreneurship and business strategy literature, the importance of vision and its impact on performance is stressed (Filion, 1991; Isenberg, 1987; Kotter, 1990; Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). House and Shamir (1993) define vision as an ideal that represents or reflects the shared values to which the organization wishes to aspire. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (1987) propose vision is an ideal and unique image of the future. From both perspectives, the ideal is a new conceptualization of organization. The next challenge is to see if the dialogue created in these interactions can be amplified to support the networks the participants belong to and the organization as a whole.

Networks

Cooren and Taylor (1997) note that the immediate circumstances of organizational conversations link to the organizing properties of the network in which they figure. Their emphasis on networks provides a basis for understanding the translation of individual member's conversations to the extended strategies and operational activities of the organization as a whole.

Weick (1979) declares:

The word *organization* is a noun, and it is also a myth. If you look for an organization, you won't find it. What you find is that there are events, linked together, that transpire within concrete walls and these sequences, their pathways, and their timing are the forms we erroneously make into substances when we talk about an organization. Events inside organizations and organisms are locked into causal circuits that extend beyond these artificial boundaries. (p. 88)

Weick is describing a view of the organization that is similar to the position taken by Taylor et al. (1996). Weick also establishes central principles of the network perspective, that organizing is a process, something that is ongoing, not static, and interdependent. Cooren and Taylor (1997) argue the process is bound in mediation.

Heath (1994) found networks are enacted through interpersonal relationships between people and result in a structure built on the basis of communication relationships. Stinchcombe (1990) contends networks come to life from the organization's effort to obtain, utilize, store, and retrieve information. Networks also come to life as a function of relationship. Cooren and Taylor (1997) emphasize the role of relationships in networks by stressing the link between organizational conversations (text generated by individuals and groups as they relate) to the organizing properties of the network in which they figure. They are pointing to the social basis and function of networks.

Networks serve many functions within an organization including sharing ideas for innovation, assimilating and integrating members (while excluding others), socializing,

and exerting power and influence. Additionally, members of an organization form their identity from the organization and the networks to which they belong (Eisenberg, Monge, & Miller, 1984). Cooren and Taylor (1997) propose the reverse is true as well. They contend the organization emerges in the communication of the members.

The review of literature supporting the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study suggests the following research questions:

RQ1 – In what ways do organizations emerge, through the discourse of members as outlined in the first translation (text-to-conversation) of the model proposed by Taylor et al. (1996)?

RQ2 – In what ways does text generated by the second translation (conversation-to-text) provide a significant link to the organizing properties of the network and thereby amplify the mediated outcome to support the organization as a whole?

RQ3 – In what ways does organization continue to emerge through the on-going communication of the members?

RQ4 – In what ways does organization, as it is formulated or reformulated, translate throughout the workforce?

The first two research questions address the two demonstration steps called for in Cooren and Taylor (1997). Questions three and four focus attention on the reoccurring nature and reach of the theory.

Taylor et al. (1996) propose that organizations are created in the conversations of their members and that they evolve as those conversations change. The current study seeks to demonstrate the process outlined in their theory by observing members of an

organization as they participate in facilitated vision and strategic planning sessions. These sessions are what Taylor et al. describe as conventional procedures. They provide a contextual framing for the members' interactions. The examination focuses on how members develop and communicate their own views of organizational reality. Based on the speech act theory of Austin (1962), Cooren and Taylor (1997) argue that the function of communication is not merely to represent the world but equally to serve as a medium of action. They propose we bring the world into being by the "talking" of it. The current study provides an opportunity to observe the members of an organization *speaking* a new version of the organization into existence.

We are experiencing a world where change is the norm. Rapid transformation and the emergence of new forms of organization are no longer the exception they are the rule. If we, as communication scholars, are not to be overwhelmed by events and lost in a frantic effort to explain in detail, that which is already obsolete, we must focus our attention on more robust organic theories. It is critical that we begin to understand how organizations emerge in communication. Taylor et al. (1996), Cooren and Taylor (1997), and the current study are significant in that they seek to explain that process.

Summary

The current chapter provided an overview of the organizational culture and organizational communication literature. The assertion is made that the theories of Taylor et al. (1996) are grounded primarily in interpretive perspective. Finally, reviews of specific theories within that perspective as well as network theory provide insight into the theoretical basis for the current study. Chapter Three addresses the method by which the

study was conducted.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the literature pertaining to the present study and the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996). The current chapter discusses the participants who are used in the study and the procedure by which the study is conducted.

Conceptualization of the Study

The current study is primarily focused on addressing the four proposed research questions. The first observation was in what ways organization emerges through the discourse of a group of managers as outlined by Taylor et al. (1996). In addition, in what ways was any text amplified to support the organization as a whole? The current study also attempted to determine in what ways organization continues to emerge within the conversation of the members. Finally, an effort was made to determine in what ways the emergent view of the organization exists throughout the division.

Participants

Participants were members of the Business Services Division of a large Southwestern University. The University is one of the leading educational and research facilities in its region and has an enrollment of more than 27,000 students. The Business Services Division consists of the auxiliary services departments including Housing, Dining, Printing, and the University Union. All of these departments produce revenue for

the University. The culture of the division is open and members are encouraged to communicate. The director has promoted the principles of customer service and process improvement for a number of years. He also encourages personal creativity, responsibility, and ownership. Historically, individuals within the division are eager to engage in the type of group activities proposed in the current study.

There were two distinct groups of participants. The first group represented the management of the division and the second included hourly and salaried employees. Participants in the management group included managers and department heads ranging in years of service from 5 to 32 years, the average being 19.7 years. The director of the division was a participant in the management group. The management participants are all college educated and six have graduate degrees. There were seventeen total participants in the group (n=17).

The second group of participants included forty-nine employees from the division (n=49). The employee group contained salaried and hourly employees from the division. These employees ranged in years of service from 4 to 32 years, the average being 9.8 years. They have varying degrees of education from secondary to graduate levels with an average of 3 years of college.

Vision and Strategic Planning Sessions

Participants in the management group took part in two facilitated sessions. The first was a vision session followed by a strategic planning session. These sessions acted as what Taylor et al. (1996) refer to as a conventional procedure or communicative intervention. Albrecht and Zemke (1985) outline an approach to organizational vision and

strategy that builds on the following distinctions: Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Core Values, Key Result Areas, and Strategic Action. These distinctions and their definitions served as a reference during the vision and strategic planning sessions in the current study (See Appendix B).

Procedure

Prior to beginning the facilitated vision session, participants in the management group were asked to complete a pre-session questionnaire titled Pre-Session Worksheet (See Appendix A). The open-ended questionnaire was designed to capture a first round of text generation, as defined by Taylor et al. (1996). The Pre-Session Worksheet instructions are: This worksheet is an exercise to get our minds working creatively before the session. There are no dumb ideas; nothing is silly or impossible. Try to generate as many responses as you can. Be visionary. Have fun! There are a total of four questions on the instrument. Question #1 – As it exists today, how would you describe Business Services? Question #2 – When you think of Business Services, 5 years into the future, what words, phrases, descriptors come to mind? (Think large, out of the box; the only limitation is your imagination!). Question #3 – While still thinking about what we might become in 5 years, what already exists that will help us get to our desired future? Question #4 – What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?

During the vision session, participants in the management group were charged with producing a statement of vision and mission, the creation of core values, and identification of key result areas for the next operational period. The strategy session

involved the identification of steps and activities that will result in the achievement of the organization's vision. Each of the two sessions was approximately six hours in length. Sessions were conducted eight weeks apart.

During each session, the facilitator ensured full participation by using different activities including calling on individuals, having individuals write answers on paper, breaking participants into small groups of 3-4 persons, and having selected individuals present the work done in the small group sessions. Participants were also called on to assist in facilitation by speaking or writing in front of the group. The facilitator sought to establish and maintain an open and creative environment throughout the sessions by encouraging participants to generate input, ask questions, make requests, state objections or provide any other form of feedback they wished to share.

Near the end of the strategy session, the Post-Session Worksheet (See Appendix C) was distributed. Participants responded to the same four questions asked in the Pre-Session Worksheet. The participant's responses to the questionnaire were compared to the Pre-Session Worksheet responses.

Business Services Today and Tomorrow questionnaires (See Appendix D) were distributed to the hourly and salaried employees that made up the second group. The four open ended questions on the instrument are identical to the inquiries on the management group's pre and post-session worksheets.

Analysis of Data

The data recorded in the management group's pre and post-session worksheets were subjected to content analysis. The principle researcher and one additional coder

used Bulmer's (1979) method to identify categories of participant responses within the questionnaires. They reviewed all the data independently and followed Bulmer's method, including each response in one category only. Intercoader agreement was 88%. The coder and researcher met to review the outcome of the independent sorting activity and to seek consensus on conflicting classifications. Any responses that occurred only once were placed in the "Other" category. A comparison of emerging categories in the pre and post-session worksheets was conducted to determine if the text had evolved.

Data from question 3 and question 4 of each questionnaire was used to construct pre-session and post-session force field diagrams. Force field analysis is a structured method of looking at two opposing forces acting on a situation. In the current study, the two opposing forces are things that might help or hinder in creating the organization's desired future. The diagram is constructed by drawing a line vertically down the center of a flipchart page. The left side is used to list all the things that may "help" the organization reach the goal and what may "hinder" is listed on the right side. Once the force field diagram has been constructed, leadership can determine which of the hindrances is a priority for immediate problem solving. In the current study, the force field diagram is a text source that serves as an additional potential indicator of an evolving text and organization.

The data recorded from the employee group's questionnaire was also subjected to content analysis following Bulmer's method. The principle researcher and one additional coder reviewed all the data independently. Intercoader agreement was 78%. The coder and researcher met to review the outcome of the sorting procedure and to seek consensus on

conflicting classifications. Any responses that occurred only once were placed in the “Other” category. The result was compared to the outcome from the management group’s post-session worksheet to determine if the emerging categories were similar in an attempt to determine if management’s conceptualization of the organization was translating down to the front-line departments. The responses to questions three and four were used to construct a force field diagram from the employee perspective.

Summary

The current chapter described the participants used in the study and the procedure by which the study was conducted. Chapter Four presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter Three described the method by which the study was conducted. The current chapter presents the survey results, outcomes of the facilitated vision/strategy sessions, and the results of the research questions.

Survey Results

The questionnaires distributed to the management and employee groups were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis involves counting communication phenomena and categorizing them. In the current study, categories consisted of reoccurring responses identified in the participant questionnaires.

The management group's pre-session questionnaire was distributed to 17 total participants (n=17). Question #1 (As it exists today how would you describe Business Services?) resulted in 42 total responses. Seven reoccurring categories were identified. An additional "Other" category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 1). The most frequently occurring category was Service (65% of the total responses). Responses in the Service category included "committed to serving the university community," "service oriented," "commercial operation in service to the university," "customer oriented," "extremely service oriented," and "go the extra mile." Additional categories included Support, Working Together, and Fund Generators with

Table 1

Management Pre-Session Worksheet – Question #1 (Today)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Service	27	65.00
Support	3	7.00
Working Together	3	7.00
Fund Generators	3	7.00
Other	6	14.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question)

3 responses each representing a 3% share each of the total responses. “Support faculty and students in achieving higher education” and “support educational mission” are examples of the support category. “Working together” and “ready to work with you” illustrate working together. Fund generator responses included “generate money” and “dollar generation of university.” The Other category contains 6 individual non-reoccurring responses for a 14% share of the total.

Question #2 (How would you describe Business Services 5 years from now?) resulted in 36 total responses. Eight reoccurring categories were identified. An additional “Other” category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 2). Expansion/Growth is the most frequently used category with 12 responses for 33% of the total. Expansion/Growth responses are illustrated by “providing services to more

students,” “growth,” “growing to keep up with demands,” and “expanding to meet changing student body.” The next most frequently used category was Change with 7

Table 2

Management Pre-Session Worksheet – Question #2 (Future)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Expansion/Growth	12	33.00
Change	7	19.00
Partnership	3	8.00
Support	2	6.00
Innovation	2	6.00
Funding	2	6.00
Higher Tech	2	6.00
Other	6	17.00

(Percentages are based on the total number of responses to this question)

responses for 19% of the total. Typical change responses were “change in how we communicate” and “changing population.” Support, Innovation, Funding, and Higher Tech each represent 6% of the total responses. The support category included “continue to support students and faculty.” Illustrations of innovation are “creating and providing new services” and “innovative.” Funding responses included “external funding” and “money generator.” “Advance with technology” exemplifies a higher tech response. The

other category contains 6 individual responses 17% overall.

Content analysis of questions #4 (What already exists that will help us get to our desired future?) and #5 (What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?) resulted in the identification of help and hinder categories used to construct the force field analysis in Table 3. Question #4 concerning those things that would help resulted in 46 total responses. Seven reoccurring categories were identified. Five single (non-reoccurring) responses were placed in the other category representing 11% of the overall total. The most frequently occurring help category was Attitude/Behavior with 11 responses for 24% of the total. Attitude/Behavior responses are exemplified by terms such as “openness,” “positive,” and “adaptive.” Leadership was the next most frequently occurring category with 8 responses for 17% of the total. Leadership responses included “administrative commitment,” “commitment of director and department managers,” “visionary leader,” and “sharp leader.” There were 6 Employee category responses such as “good employees,” “diverse group of people,” and “talent of employees.” The Employee category represented 13% of the total responses. Customer Service responses such as “acknowledge our customers” and “service mentality” accounted for 5 responses 11% of the total. Relationship and Planning/Strategy categories had 4 responses. Each category represented 9% of total responses. “Partnerships within Business Services” is an example of a relationship response. Planning/strategy responses such as “strong planning system” and “awareness of future influences” were reported. The Resources category accounted for 3 responses and 7% overall. “Adequate resources” was one response that participants thought would

Table 3

Management Pre-Session Worksheet – Question #3 (Help) & #4 (Hinder)

Force Field Analysis Using Descending Category Frequency List

Help			Hinder		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Attitude/Behavior	11	24.00	Lack of Resources	15	35.00
Leadership	8	17.00	System	9	21.00
Employees	6	13.00	Change	3	7.00
Customer Service	5	11.00	Technology	3	7.00
Relationships	4	9.00	Closed Minds	2	5.00
Planning/Strategy	4	9.00	Lack of Motivation	2	5.00
Resources	3	7.00	Lack of Innovation	2	5.00
Other	5	11.00	Other	7	16.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question.)

help the division achieve it's desired future.

The management group's question #5 concerning those things that would hinder resulted in 42 total responses. Seven reoccurring categories were identified. Seven single (non-reoccurring) responses were placed in the other category representing 16% of the overall total. The most frequently reoccurring hinder category was Lack of Resources. There were 15 responses in the category representing 35% of the total. Resource responses included "lack of space," "lack of resources," "lack of funds," and "lack of staffing." System category responses occurred 9 times for 21%. Examples of these

responses include “slow state of system and paperwork,” “bureaucratic red tape,” and “state policies that aren’t flexible enough to allow creative solutions.” Seven percent of the overall responses regarded Change. There were three Change responses including “not staying up with the times” and “unwillingness to make a change.” The Technology category also had three responses for 7% overall an example being “inability to access technology.” “Having closed minds” and “closed minds” made up the Closed Minds category. Closed minds responses represented 5% of the overall responses. Two other categories Lack of Motivation and Lack of Innovation also had 2 responses each. Lack of Innovation responses included “lack of creative thinking/innovation” and “administration resistant to innovation and risk taking.”

The management group’s post-session questionnaire was distributed to a total of 8 participants (n=8). Even with the reduced number of participants in the session, there was still representation from all departments of Business Services. Question #1 (As it exists today how would you describe Business Services?) resulted in 17 total responses. Five reoccurring categories were identified. An additional “Other” category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 4). There are two categories that occur more than any of the others. They are Customer Service and Relationships. Each has a frequency of 5 responses representing 29% of the total. Customer Service responses included “provides quality services to community, students, faculty,” “in the business of service to customers,” and “focused on customer.” As the other most frequently occurring category, relationship responses are exemplified by “formation of great relationships,” “emeshed in the university on many levels,” and “actively involved in

Table 4

Management Post-Session Worksheet – Question #1 (Today)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Customer Service	5	29.00
Relationships	5	29.00
Umbrella	2	12.00
Values Driven	2	12.00
Other	3	18.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question)

many parts of operation of the university.” Umbrella and Values Driven categories accounted for 12% each of the total. Each category had 2 responses. Umbrella category responses such as “umbrella of auxiliary services” and “loosely assigned holding company” were reported. Values responses included “value driven” and “bound by fairly bold shared values and perspectives.” The “Other” category contained 3 individual (non-reoccurring) responses representing 18% of the total.

Post-session question #2 (How would you describe Business Services 5 years from now?) resulted in 20 total responses. Four reoccurring categories were identified. An additional “Other” category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 5). The Expansion/Growth category had 7 responses representing 35% of the total. Expansion/growth responses included “expanded services,” “new building,” and

“technology will create a great spurt of growth.” There are 5 Customer Service responses. The Customer Service category accounts for 25% of the total and is illustrated by “even more focused on the customer,” “still customer focused,” and “of service.”

Table 5

Management Post-Session Worksheet – Question #2 (Future)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Expansion/Growth	7	35.00
Customer Service	5	25.00
Relationships	5	25.00
Other	3	15.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question)

The final reoccurring category was Relationships. Relationships were mentioned 5 times representing 25% of the total responses. Responses such as “more unified,” “new opportunities with athletics,” and “more involved with academic side of campus” were typical. There were 3 separate responses in the “Other” category that did not fit into one of the four reoccurring categories.

Content analysis of the management group’s post-session worksheet questions #4 (What already exists that will help us get to our desired future?) and #5 (What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?) resulted in the identification of help and hinder categories used to construct the force field analysis in Table 6.

Question #4 concerning those things that would help resulted in 16 total responses. Three reoccurring categories were identified. Five single (non-reoccurring) responses were placed in the other category representing 31% of the overall total. The most frequently reoccurring help category was Service. The 4 service responses included “common service attitude,” “enjoy serving,” “people and departments working together to serve” and “customer first concept.” Service represented 25% of the overall total. The second category, Leadership, also with 25% of the total responses is exemplified by “strong foundation of servant leadership.” Finally, the Relationships category with 19% had 3 responses such as “seeking out partnerships,” and “willingness to communicate, participate, and crossover to academic side.”

A total of 14 hinder responses to post-session question #5 were recorded. Content analysis revealed 3 categories of reoccurring responses including System, Attitude/Behavior, and Lack of Resources. Six system responses exemplified by “emphasis on compliance as opposed to performance” and “larger university lagging behind Business Services in terms of understanding issues and potential resolutions” accounted for 43% of the total. With 3 responses (21% overall), lack of resources was illustrated by both “lack of financial resources” and “lack of people resources.” The attitude/behavior category had 2 responses including “old attitudes” and represented 14% of the overall responses. There were 3 non-reoccurring responses in the other category for 21% overall.

Table 6

Management Post-Session Worksheet – Question #3 (Help) & #4 (Hinder)

Force Field Analysis Using Descending Category Frequency List

Help			Hinder		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Service	4	25.00	System	6	43.00
Leadership	4	25.00	Lack of Resources	3	21.00
Relationships	3	19.00	Attitude/Behavior	2	14.00
Other	5	31.00	Other	3	21.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to each question)

The employee group questionnaire was titled Business Services Today and Tomorrow and was distributed to 80 hourly and salaried workers. A total of 49 participants (n=49) returned completed questionnaires a 61% return rate. Question #1 (As it exists today how would you describe Business Services?) resulted in 100 responses. Twelve reoccurring categories were identified. An additional “Other” category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 7). The most frequently occurring category was Customer Service with 20 responses representing 20% of the total. Customer Service responses included “provide excellent service,” “people go above and beyond to serve,” “best service possible,” and “great attitude and service.” Customer service variations also included “customer service oriented organization” and “serve the university.” Revenue Generator was the second most frequently occurring category with

13 responses or 13% of the total. Revenue generator responses

Table 7

Business Services Today and Tomorrow – Question #1 (Today)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Customer Service	20	20.00
Revenue Generator	13	13.00
Student Support	10	10.00
Needs Improvement	9	9.00
Leadership	8	8.00
Change/Growing	7	7.00
Group/Team	6	6.00
Inertia	4	4.00
Planning	2	2.00
Information	2	2.00
Fun	2	2.00
Other	13	13.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question)

included “makes a lot of money,” “exists to make money,” “brings profit to the university.” There were 10 Student Support responses such as “has student’s interests at heart.” The Student Support category contained 10% of the total responses. Needs

Improvement contained 9 responses (9% overall). Typical responses were “room for improvement,” “needs facelift,” and “needs excitement.” The Leadership category had 8 responses representing 8% overall. Examples include “Super head honcho” and “consistent leader and steady force.” Change/Growing also had 8 responses including “constant state of change,” “fast and growing,” and “lots of potential.” There were 4 Inertia related responses (4% overall). Examples such as “slow moving,” and “some stagnation” were recorded. Three categories Planning, Information, and Fun have 2 responses each. These categories were each 2% of the overall responses. Planning was mentioned in conjunction with both the “backbone of the university” and “driving the system.” Participants reported that Business Services was an “important source of operations information.” Fun was noted as both “have fun” and “fun.” Thirteen individual responses were in the “Other” category.

Question # 2 (How would you describe Business Services 5 years from now?) resulted in 145 total responses. Fifteen reoccurring categories were identified. An additional “Other” category was created for single (non-reoccurring) responses (See Table 8). The most frequently reoccurring category was Expansion/Growth with 32 responses or 22% of the total. Typical of expansion/growth responses were “added 50 maintenance workers and contractors,” “much larger,” “fulfilling potential,” and “growth with the organization.” Second in frequency was the Product Innovation category with 31 responses 21% of the total. “Dining open 24 hrs,” “version of Kinko’s open 24 hrs,” “meal cards that work at the Union,” and “take out service for students” are a few of the ideas in the Product Innovation category. Customer Service contained 16 responses

Table 8

Business Services Today and Tomorrow – Question #2 (Future)

Descending Category Frequency List

Category	Frequency	Percent
Expansion/Growth	32	22.00
Product Innovation	31	21.00
Customer Service	16	11.00
Attributes	10	7.00
Employee Oriented	9	6.00
Organizational Recognition	6	4.00
Inertia	6	4.00
Technology	5	3.00
Relationships	4	3.00
Autonomy	3	2.00
Outsourcing	3	2.00
Money/Resources	3	2.00
Communication	2	1.00
Leader	2	1.00
Improvement	2	1.00
Other	11	8.00

(Percentages based on the total number of responses to the question.)

(11% overall). Participants noted, “even more service oriented” as an example. With 10 responses, the Attributes category represented 7% of the total responses. There were a number of attributes listed including “functional, convenient, flexible, creative, consistent, involved, and relevant.” Employee Oriented had a 6% share overall with 9 responses. Among the employee oriented responses were “apartments that are appealing to prospective housing directors,” “employee supportive,” “employee caring,” and “high value in all employees.” Two categories accounted for 4% of the total responses each. They were Organizational Recognition and Inertia. Organizational recognition examples included “a force to be reckoned with on campus,” “an institution!,” “becoming more noticeable to the university,” and “resource for university and system.” Inertia was illustrated by “housing and union stuck where they are,” “intolerant of new ideas,” “should have moved on,” and “stunted.” Five responses relating to Technology including “satellite operations all over campus,” “technology becoming stronger,” and “very high tech” represented 3% of the total. Relationships also accounted for 3% of the overall total. Relationships category responses such as “more sponsorship/partnership with large companies” and “more people willing to work together” were recorded. Three categories Autonomy, Outsourcing, and Money/Resources each had 2% of the total responses (3 responses each). “Outsourcing of services” and “management of contracted services” were both mentioned. Money/resources responses included “more\$\$\$” and “dealing with only actual revenue generating areas.” Communication, Leader, and Improvement categories, having 2 responses each, represented a 1% share per category. Eleven individual responses were in the “Other” category.

Content analysis of the employee questions #4 (What already exists that will help us get to our desired future?) and #5 (What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?) resulted in the identification of help and hinder categories used to construct the force field analysis in Table 9. Question #4 concerning those things that would help resulted in 75 total responses. Sixteen reoccurring categories were identified. Five single (non-reoccurring) responses were placed in the other category representing 5% of the overall total. The most frequently reoccurring help category was Staff. The Staff category contained 12 responses such as “good people,” “strong people,” “people with knowledge,” “dedicated employees,” and “staff that has been there.” Staff responses accounted for 16% of the total. The leadership category with, 8 responses (11% overall) was exemplified by “strong leaders,” “dedicated forward thinking leaders,” and “new president.” Another category with an 11% share was Willingness to Change. “Willing to change,” “introducing new changes monthly,” and “opportunity and willingness to change and develop starting at the top” were reported in the category. Technology responses occurred 6 times for 8% overall including “new technology” and “commitment to update technology.” The categories of Team, Growth, and Customer Service represented 5% of the total responses each (4 responses per category). Among the team responses were “stay a team,” “continued team building,” and “team workers.” Growth was exemplified by “expansion” and “new campus across town.” Customer service responses such as “leadership that is dedicated to customer service,” “atmosphere of service,” and “remembering customers is first” were reported. Six categories had 3 responses each (4% overall). They included Innovation, Open-minded, Training, Vision,

Table 9

Business Services Today and Tomorrow – Question #3 (Help) & #4 (Hinder)Force Field Analysis Using Descending Category Frequency List

Help			Hinder		
<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Staff	12	16.00	Resistance to Change	13	19.00
Leadership	8	11.00	Lack of Resources	11	16.00
Willingness to Change	8	11.00	Leadership	8	11.00
Technology	6	8.00	System	8	11.00
Team	4	5.00	Employee Issues	7	10.00
Growth	4	5.00	Technology	5	7.00
Customer Service	4	5.00	Communication	5	7.00
Innovation	3	4.00	Lack of Innovation	5	7.00
Open-minded	3	4.00	Turf Issues	2	3.00
Training	3	4.00	Other	6	9.00
Vision	3	4.00			
Communication	3	4.00			
Resources	3	4.00			
Ability to Learn	2	3.00			
Relationships	2	3.00			
Student Focus	2	3.00			
Other	5	5.00			

Communication, and Resources. Typical responses in these categories included “people in key positions open to new concepts/ideas,” “the ability to get training other places and ideas,” “people with vision,” “strengthened communication,” and “proper financial responsibility and stewardship.” Ability to Learn, Relationships, and Student Focus categories rounded out the reoccurring help responses. Each category contained 2 responses for 3% of the overall responses. “Learn from other universities,” “relationships with each other and other members of the university,” and “student minded” are examples of responses in these categories.

The employee group’s question #5 concerning those things that would hinder resulted in 70 total responses. Nine reoccurring categories were identified. Six single (non-reoccurring) responses were placed in the other category representing 16% of the overall total. The most frequently reoccurring hinder category reported was Resistance to Change it represented 19% of the total with 13 responses. These responses were exemplified by “people unwilling to change,” “locking into the we’ve done it this way for years idea,” and “resistance to change.” The second most reported category was Lack of Resources. The Lack of Resources category had 11 responses (16% overall) such as “not enough employees,” “lack of facilities,” and “decreasing funding services.” Leadership was reported 8 times for 11% of total responses. Responses included “not all leaders devoted to great service,” “pushing leadership and not backing it up,” and “some areas have poor leadership.” The next most frequently occurring category, System, also had 8 responses. Typical system responses were “lack of accountability for performance,” “administrative structure above Business Services resistant to change,” and “institutional

rule and compliance opposed to competency/developmental drive.” The Employee Issues category contained 7 responses (10% overall) including “attitudes of present day employees,” “lack of appreciation for all levels of the workforce,” and salaries that are 5-7 thousand dollars less than similar universities.” Technology, Communication and Lack of Innovation categories each represented 7% of the total responses. Each category had 5 responses. “Equipment and software not consistent in areas” and lack of “digital presses” were typical of technology hindrances. Communication responses included “lack of communication” and “inaccurate communication.” The Lack of Innovation category was exemplified by “need to become innovators” and “old ideas.” The final reoccurring category contained 2 Turf Issues (3% overall). These were “departmental territorialism” and “turf.”

Outcomes of Facilitated Vision/Strategy Sessions

At the beginning of the vision session, categories from the content analysis of the Pre-Session Worksheets (the text) were transferred to flip chart pages. The activity formed a base for the translation of text into conversation as defined by Taylor et al. (1996). The facilitator guided participants through a review of the contents of each category, allowing participants to seek clarification and to add ideas at will. There was a brief preliminary discussion about the vision distinction. The group decided to accept the university’s vision statement and begin their work with the development of a divisional mission statement. Their feeling was that, as a division, they should do everything they could to drive forward the fulfillment of the university’s vision.

Next, participants were broken into small groups and asked to draft preliminary

versions of a mission statement using the categories setting the stage for the second translation in the Taylor et al. theory where conversation is reformulated into text. Representatives from each group read the statement their group crafted. The group as a whole synthesized the separate statements generated by the small groups into a single agreed-upon statement of mission. The same process was repeated as the group developed core values and key result areas. Participants were guided by definitions of these distinctions. Each definition was projected on a screen while the participants worked on that distinction. The core values they identified were commitment, integrity and service. The three key result areas were determining customers and their needs, controlling costs, and improve employee response + ability.

The outcome of the first round of activity was word processed, printed, and presented to the participants. They had the opportunity to discuss the entire body of work and negotiate any changes they wish to make. Once participants had arrived at an agreed-upon version of each distinction, that version was entered into a laptop computer and projected onto the screen.

At the completion of the activity, participants took a break to celebrate their accomplishment. During the break, they were encouraged to review their work and to document their thoughts so they could share them with the group after the break. The process resumed after the break until a final draft of each distinction (mission, core values, and key result areas) was agreed upon. The final version (See Figure 4.1.) was entered into the computer and projected for the group's acknowledgement and adoption. Based on the finalized mission, and core value statements, the group was asked to

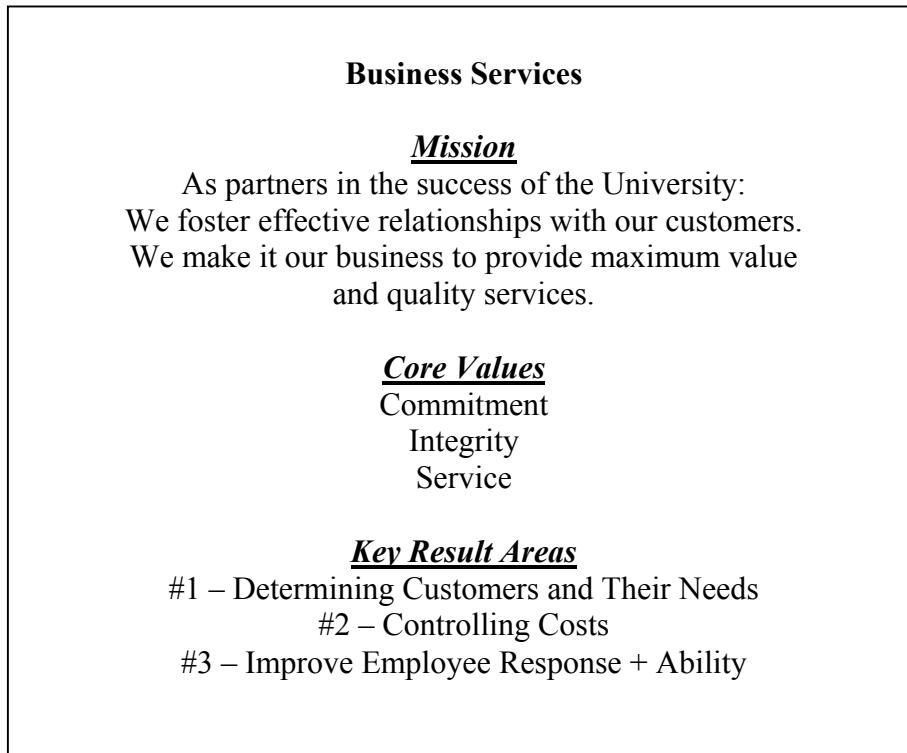


Figure 4.1. Mission Statement, Core Values, and Key Result Areas

generate three to four key result areas for the next operational period. Participants first worked in small groups and then as a whole following the procedure described in the previous phase.

Eight weeks later in the strategic planning session, the management group was asked to create a plan of action for achieving each of the key result areas. As the activity began, the group determined Key Result Area #2 – Controlling Costs from the vision session was not applicable to the upcoming operational period. In the time that had lapsed between sessions, they had successfully completed their last budget cycle and felt that controlling costs was no longer an immediate concern. The participants engaged in a discussion concerning a more relevant area of focus. The result was the addition of two

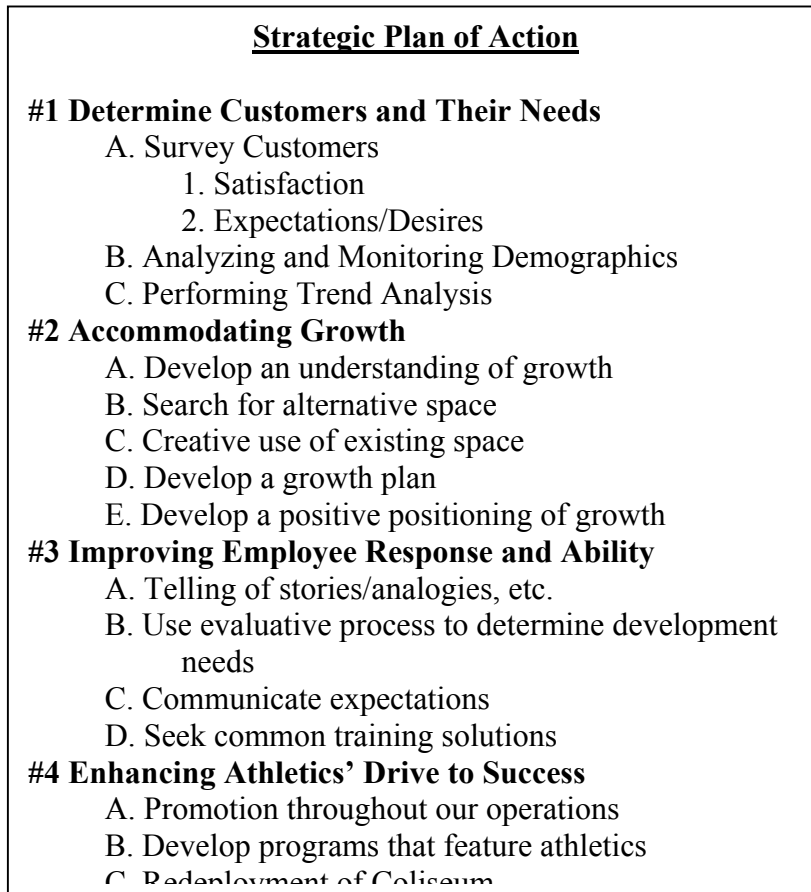


Figure 4.2. Strategic Plan of Action

new key result areas bringing the total to four. The key result areas are: #1 – Determine customers and their needs, #2 – Accommodating growth, #3 – Improving employee response and ability, and #4 – Enhancing Athletics' drive to success. The strategic session involved the identification of steps or activities in each of these key result areas that are crucial to the division achieving its mission. Those steps were listed in the group's Strategic Plan of Action (See Figure 4.2.). The session ended with an acknowledgement of the work generated and the participation of those in attendance.

Results for Research Question One

RQ1 – In what ways do organizations emerge through the discourse of members as outlined in the first translation (text-to-conversation) of the model proposed by Taylor et al. (1996)? In the current study, participants in the management group, using the original recorded categories from the flip chart pages (text), easily engaged in an extended dialogue (conversation). During the course of the exchanges, a new and expanded view of the division emerged. The result was the creation of text namely the new divisional mission statement, core values, and key result areas. The new mission statement declares what the group's charge is and how they expect to accomplish it as follows: "As partners in the success of the University: We foster effective relationships with our customers. We make it our business to provide maximum value and quality services." A direct comparison of the new Business Services mission statement with the previous one indicates that an expanded view of the organization has emerged. The previous statement simply declared, "Our mission is to add the maximum possible value in all we do." The emergent statement positions the division in a partnership relationship with the University. As a partner, Business Services is committing itself to higher levels of accountability and engagement. The commitment to foster effective relationships with customers underscores the expansion from simply providing value to establishing, building, and maintaining relationships. Core values (commitment, integrity, and service) and three key result areas (determining customers and their needs, controlling costs, and improve employee response + ability) support the new mission statement. The emergent view of the organization is broader and more specific than what previously existed.

Results for Research Question Two

RQ2 – In what ways does text generated by the second translation (conversation-to-text) provide a significant link to the organizing properties of the network and thereby amplify the mediated outcome to support the organization as a whole? The text generated by the second translation did amplify the mediated outcome to support the organization as a whole. Participants in the strategic planning session were able to identify specific activities that amplified each of the key result areas. Activities such as surveying customers, analyzing and monitoring demographics, and performing trend analysis amplified key result area #1 – “Determine Customers and Their Needs.” Key result area #2 – “Accommodating Growth” was amplified by developing an understanding of growth, searching for alternative space, creative use of existing space, developing a growth plan, and developing a positive positioning of growth. Amplification of key result area #3 – “Improving Employee Response and Ability” included telling of stories/analogies, using the evaluative process to determine development needs, communicating expectations, and seeking common training solutions. “Enhancing Athletics’ Drive to Success” (key result area #4) included promotion throughout our operations, developing programs that feature athletics, redeployment of Coliseum, and improving concessions. Each of these activities provides specific links to the organizing properties of the broader network, the University.

Results for Research Question Three

RQ3 – In what ways does organization continue to emerge through the on-going communication of the members? In the current study, a comparison of the survey data

for the managerial participants on the pre and post-session questionnaires indicates the organization continues to emerge. There were specific changes in response categories between the two surveys. The Relationships category created in the post-session today data did not appear in the pre-session today data. The Relationships category ties Customer Service as the most frequently occurring post-session today category each with a 29% share of total responses. The service related category has dropped in significance from almost two thirds of the pre-session responses to less than one third of the post-session responses indicating a strong shift in focus between the two sessions.

The Relationships category is a direct reflection of the “foster effective relationships” declaration in the mission statement created in the vision session between the surveys. Another category from the post-session data that mirrors the mission statement is Values Driven (12% of the total). Responses such as “bound by fairly bold shared values” and “values driven” support the core values created in the vision session. Together, these two (previously unreported) categories represent 41% of the post-session (how they see Business Services today) responses. As such, they are strong indicators of the on-going emergence of organization.

A comparison of the pre and post-session (how they see Business Services in the future) responses also supports these findings. Again, the Relationships category does not appear in the pre-session analysis. It represents 25% of the post-session future responses. The category of Partnerships, which is perhaps relationship related, does appear in the pre-session analysis but it is not nearly as significant (only 8% of the total responses) as the post-session relationship responses.

Further evidence of continued emergence of the organization is the amount of supportive strategic detail created in the strategic plan of action. Eighteen specific areas of activity were identified in support of the four key result areas. The key result areas were created in the vision session and these specific activities came out of the interaction and dialogue in the strategic session two months later. The organization continues to emerge from one session to the next through the strategic detail.

A comparison of the data from the pre and post-session force field analysis further supports the on-going emergence of the organization. Again, the category of Relationships occurs in the post-session help data and not in the pre-session responses. Responses such as “seeking out partnerships” and “willingness to communicate, participate, and crossover to academic side” indicate a continuing shift toward the building effective relationships theme established the earlier session. These responses represented 19% of the help data.

Each of these illustrations demonstrates how the organization continues to emerge through the on-going communication of the members. The data cover a time span of eight weeks and two separate events and surveys.

Results for Research Question Four

RQ4 – In what ways does organization, as it is formulated or reformulated, translate throughout the workforce? Survey data from the employee group does not support an immediate translation of the emergent organization throughout the workforce. Categories from the Business Service Today and Tomorrow questionnaire do not correlate with the final outcomes of the managerial group. For example, while the

category Relationships does appear in the employee group question #2 (future) data it only represents 3% of the total responses as compared to 25% overall in the managerial post-session (future) responses. One of the responses “more people willing to work together” also suggests employee relationship interpretation is narrower than the managerial reporting. It is more internally (co-worker) focused. The employee group force field analysis supports similar findings in the Relationship category. It does appear but is only 3% of the total responses. It is centered on “relationships with each other” and “student centered” both of which are narrower more traditional views of Business Services relationships.

Immediate actions outside the survey did indicate support for the reformulation of the division was beginning to occur. The new mission statement was printed on the back of business cards. The mission statement, core values and key result areas were published in the division newsletter. In addition, the entire strategic plan of action was reported to the senior leadership of the university.

Summary

The current chapter provided a description of how the data was collected and a description of the participants. In addition, the survey results, outcomes of the facilitated vision/strategy sessions, and the results of the research questions were reported. Chapter Five provides a discussion of the results.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the results of the current study. The current chapter discusses the results of the study, presents the limitations of the study, and discusses the implications for future research.

Summary of the Study

Pre-Session Worksheet questionnaires were distributed to a group of 17 managers within the Business Services division of a university. The participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding how they see Business Services today and five years in the future. The pre-session today question yielded 42 total responses. Seven reoccurring categories were identified. The pre-session future question yielded 36 total responses. Eight reoccurring categories were identified. Questions regarding what would help or hinder the divisions efforts to reach its desired future resulted in 46 help responses (7 reoccurring categories) and 42 hinder responses (7 reoccurring categories).

The same management group attended a facilitated vision session where they created a Business Services mission statement, listing of core values, and key result areas. Eight representatives from the group attended a facilitated strategic planning session. During the session, they created a strategic plan of action. The plan included activities that would contribute to the accomplishment of each of the key result areas. These

participants were asked to respond to a Post-Session Worksheet questionnaire. The questionnaire sought current responses to the same questions asked on the pre-session instrument. The Post-Session Worksheet from the management group yielded 17 total today responses. Five reoccurring categories were identified. The post-session future question resulted in 20 total responses. Four reoccurring categories were identified. Post-session questions regarding what would help or hinder the divisions efforts to reach its desired future resulted in 16 help responses (3 reoccurring categories) and 14 hinder responses (3 reoccurring categories).

Business Services Today and Tomorrow questionnaires were distributed to 80 salaried and hourly employees within Business Services three weeks after management's strategic planning session. The questionnaire contained the same open-ended questions posed to the management group. 49 employees in the group returned completed questionnaires (61% return rate). The sampling resulted in 100 today responses (12 categories), 145 future responses (15 categories), 75 help responses (16 categories), and 70 hinder responses (9 categories).

The outcomes of the facilitated vision and strategic planning sessions were recorded. Data recorded in the surveys was subjected to content analysis by two coders using Bulmer's (1979) method to identify reoccurring categories.

Summary of Research Findings

The first research question asked in what ways does organization emerge through the discourse of members as outlined in the first translation (text-to-conversation) of the model proposed by Taylor et al. (1996)? The current study found that managers in a

facilitated vision session engaged in discourse that resulted in the creation of an expanded divisional mission statement. The emergent statement positioned the division as a partner in the success of the university. It also established the importance of fostering effective relationships with customers. Three supporting core values commitment, integrity, and service were created in the session along with three specific key result areas. Key result areas for the next operational period included: determining customers and their needs, controlling costs, and improve employee response and ability. Each of these outcomes was created in the communication of the managers and demonstrates the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996).

Research question number two sought an answer to what ways the text generated by the second translation (conversation-to-text) provides a significant link to the organizing properties of the network and thereby amplifies the mediated outcome to support the organization as a whole. In the current study, the question was addressed in the facilitated strategic planning session. During the course of the session, the participants were able to amplify the text generated in the vision session. They identified 18 specific activities that extended the key result areas and provide significant links to the division and the university as a whole.

The first key result area Determine Customers and Their Needs was amplified by surveying customers, analyzing and monitoring needs, and performing trend analysis. Each of these activities involves staying abreast of the needs of students, faculty, departments, divisions, and even the local and regional communities, which comprise the customer base for Business Services. Key result area two, Accommodating Growth, was

linked to the development of a growth plan. Developing an understanding of growth, searching for alternative space, creative use of existing space, and developing a positive positioning of growth were also stated in the broader objectives for accommodating growth. The third key result area focused on Improving Employee Response and Ability. Telling of stories and analogies, communicating expectations, seeking common training solutions, and using the evaluative process to determine individual needs all expanded the scope of employee development. Finally, the participants adopted the university-wide drive to support the success of athletics. The participants specifically declared they would promote athletics throughout their operations, develop programs featuring athletics, redeployment of the Coliseum, and improvement of concessions at sporting events. The strategic plan of action supports the university as a whole and extends to support the local and regional communities.

The third research question addresses the on-going emergence of organization through the communication of members. The current study found evidence supporting continued reformulation of the organization. Reformulation was confirmed by comparisons of the manager's responses to the pre and post-session questionnaires. Examples of changing responses and categories across events and surveys confirmed the organization continued to emerge through the on-going communication of the members. The emergence of the Relationships category in the post-session responses is a significant example of reformulation among the management group participants. The single largest category in the pre-session data was Customer Service representing 65% of the total responses. In the post-session data, Relationships tied Customer Service as the most

frequently occurring responses each with 29% of the total. Relationships did not exist as a category in the pre-session responses. Additionally, the participants in the strategic planning session deleted Controlling Costs as a key result area and added Accommodating Growth and Enhancing Athletics' Drive to Success as strategic goals. Changing key result areas between the vision and strategic planning sessions is another indicator of an evolving view of organization.

The final research question focuses on what ways organization, as it is formulated or re-formulated, translates throughout the workforce. A comparison of managerial responses and those of employees did not indicate significant existence of the new expanded view of organization among the hourly and salaried workers. There was little compatibility in the separate findings. The employee group responses were more reflective of the narrower traditional views of Business Services. Specific actions within the division did confirm early steps to promote adoption of the emergent view of the organization including its use on business cards, in newsletters, and in reports to leadership.

Interpretation of Results

As stated, one purpose of the current study was to provide a demonstration of the theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996). The objective was achieved. The double translation concept presented in Taylor et al. was realized. The first translation (text-to-conversation) occurred as management participants in the vision session translated text (what was said) into conversation. The text, created in their responses to the pre-session worksheet, formed the basis for a vision conversation during the first facilitated session.

In the current study, voice, body language, gestures, paper, flip charts, markers, projected images, and computer all supported the text (Taylor et al., 1996).

During the course of the vision conversation, a new and expanded view of the division emerged. The result of the members' interactions was the creation of new text, namely the new divisional mission statement, core values, and key result areas. These outcomes demonstrated the second translation (conversation-to-text) in the Taylor et al. theory.

From a speech act perspective (Austin, 1962), the participant responses to the pre-session worksheet, locutions, were turned into illocutions (actions in language) as statements of a desired future. Text was translated into conversation giving it communicative force. The division's emergent mission statement declared what the group's charge is and how they expect to accomplish it "As partners in the success of the University: We foster effective relationships with our customers. We make it our business to provide maximum value and quality services." These statements are examples of where Taylor et al. (1996) suggest organizing gets done. The perlocutionary effect called for in Austin's theory would be represented by what is actually achieved by Business Services as it acts through speech, including behavioral or attitudinal effects.

The new mission statement presents an emerging view of Business Services created in the conversation of the management participants. In their new declaration, the participants have elevated the division to being "partners in the success of the university" and they are charged to "foster effective relationships" and to "provide maximum value and quality services." The emergent view of the organization is broader and more

specific. The potential perlocutionary effects of the new language are significant. As partners in the success of the university, the members of Business Services become significant stakeholders in the university's future. As such, they may take new pride and a sense of ownership in their contributions and the university. Fostering effective relationships has the potential to impact every relationship they have both within and outside their division. It could significantly improve service delivery and even improve relationships with vendors. These are a few examples of how participants in the session were speaking a reformulation of the organization into existence. The text (mission statement, core values, key result areas, and strategic plan of action) their conversation generated may serve as a catalyst for action.

Participants in the strategic planning session were able to extend the key result areas with 18 separate strategic activities that link to the organizing properties of the broader network. The group also deleted a key result area (Controlling Costs) that had become irrelevant since the earlier vision session. They added two, more relevant, key result areas (accommodating growth and enhancing athletics' drive to success). These actions further support the premise that the emergence of organization is an on-going process. Key result areas #2 – "Accommodating Growth" and #4 – "Enhancing Athletics' Drive to Success" support the university beyond divisional or departmental levels. The action plan activities under Accommodating Growth include development of a growth plan. Discussion around accommodating growth was driven by an expressed desire to support the growth of the university. The Enhancing Athletics' Drive to Success result area refers to direct and active support of an entirely separate campus entity. The related

activities in the action plan area are broad based and they require support from all of Business Services. The success of the Athletic Department is currently a university-wide initiative. Adopting the initiative as a key result area for the division represents a significant link to the organizing properties of the broader network.

The current study also sought to determine in what ways organization continues to emerge through the conversation of the members. A comparison of categories from the management group's pre and post-session worksheets indicate significant changes supporting continued emergence. Changes occurred in both question #1 (How they see Business Services today) and question #2 (How they see Business Services in the future).

On the pre-session survey, the most frequently occurring question #1 (today) category related to the concept of service. The Service category contained 65% of the total responses, confirming the effects of the division's extensive efforts over the past few years to promote customer service. By comparison, two primary categories emerged from the post-session survey data related to question #1. Customer Service and Relationships each represented 29% of the total responses. There is a 36% drop in the frequency of Customer Service related responses in the post-session data. The emergence of Relationships as a strong reoccurring category in the post-session data indicates an on-going evolution of organization within the management group participants. Additionally, the significant appearance of a Relationships category is the direct result of the emergent mission statement, which declared, "we foster effective relationships."

A comparison of pre and post-session survey question #2 (future) responses also indicates an on-going evolution. The Relationships category represented 25% of the total

post-session survey responses to question #2. The Relationships category did not occur in responses to question #2 on the pre-session survey. In the post-session data, Relationship responses occur as often as Customer Service responses representing a significant gain on the established service paradigm. It demonstrates the management group's continued commitment to the emergent theme. The data confirms they see building relationships playing a central role in Business Services future.

The final inquiry was in what ways organization, as it is formulated or reformulated, translates throughout the workforce. The data from the employee group survey does not support an immediate translation. The new category Building Relationships does not appear in their responses to either question #1 (today) or question #2 (future). Customer Service remained the most frequently occurring category (20%) in response to question #1 (today). It also represented 11% of the total responses to question #2 (future). The employee group is still strongly grounded in the service theme that has been promoted extensively for the past few years. The short amount of time that the emergent view of the organization has been in place may account for these results. The management group had completed their vision/strategy sessions only three weeks before the employee group was surveyed.

The results of current study were supported by the principle theories that provide the foundation for the Taylor et al. theory. They were socially constructed in the relatedness of each of the participant groups. The emergent view of the organization was socially constructed through the discourse of the management group in the vision session. Symbolic convergence occurred in each of the facilitated management sessions as

participants' symbolic worlds moved toward each other and overlapped creating the opportunity for a shared fantasy. Participants in the management group converted the text, which they created individually, into a small group conversation and ultimately back into text. The participants made sense of their experience by creating a new social reality (text) and thereby creating a new reality for the organization. The symbols created by the management group and their assignment of meaning to them was evident in the data. The appearance of the Relationship category and its prominence (29% overall today and 25% future) in post-session data illustrates the on-going adoption of the new symbols. The management participants dialogue became a dynamic reality shaped by the vision session (situation) which they, in turn, helped shape. The outcomes also resulted in significant links to the organizing properties of the broader network. The strategic action plan, supported by 18 specific activities, translated the member's conversations to the extended strategies and operational activities of the university as a whole. Structure is being built on the basis of communication.

Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of the current study is the short amount of time between the samples. The entire study took place within an eleven-week period. The employee sampling followed the management group session by only three weeks which could have had a serious impact on research question four (In what ways does organization, as it is formulated or reformulated, translate throughout the workforce?). Given more time for the leadership of Business Services to promote the new mission the results could be different. Data from the current study indicates significant adoption of the Customer

Service theme by both managers (65% of the Pre-session Worksheet question #1 responses) and employees (20% of the Business Services Today and Tomorrow responses to question #1 and 11% of question #2 responses). The same may hold true for the emergent themes over time.

The drop in the number of management participants between the vision session and the strategic planning sessions is a limitation as well. Pressing management commitments were responsible for the drop in participation. While there were representatives from all Business Services departments in the second session, the decrease limited the total amount of data collected.

Poole (1994) maintains that most of the organizational communication in the past was conducted in relatively sheltered environments. He further notes that in organizations today, stability is no longer the norm. In the current study, the lack of stability is both a limitation and a driving force. It is a limitation because organizations immersed in constant change are more difficult to define and any findings are themselves as tenuous as the members creating them. In today's organizational environment people, situations, and objectives all can change significantly in a short time. Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study assert the text and conversations generated by change are constantly redefining organization. Addressing the impact of change and increasingly diverse organizational environments, Poole identifies three critical questions for organizational communication research. His inquiries focus on how organizations accommodate different cultures and interests, how new technologies are changing communication and, hence, organizations, as well as the place of communication studies in organizational

inquiry. Each of these concerns is of importance to future studies. The theory offered by Taylor et al. (1996) addresses the third of Poole's concerns. It positions communication studies as critical to the understanding of how organizations emerge.

Finally, a limitation lies in the theory proposed by Taylor and his colleagues. Neither Taylor et al. (1996) nor Cooren and Taylor (1997) account for the role of power in the emergence of organization through communication. They treat organizational communication primarily as rational consensual exchanges. Communication in organizations is often irrational and far from consensual. Organizational communication can be full of conflict and seriously affected by differentials in power. Conflict and power differentials should be addressed in future studies with the inclusion of mixed groups of participants with differing degrees of power.

Implications for Future Research

As indicated in the discussion of limitations, future studies would benefit from samplings that involve longer spans of time. They also should incorporate the issue of power in organizational communication. Even considerations of power differentials between managers are relevant. Any theory that is grounded in organizational communication cannot ignore such a strong central issue.

The current study used content analysis to identify reoccurring categories in the data from survey questionnaires. Future studies would benefit from the use of additional content analysis methods. Computer-based content analysis programs such as CATPAC and NETIMAGE could provide additional insight into organizational messages. As demonstrated in Freeman and Barnett (1986), content analysis can bring a quantitative

dimension to what is normally approached from a qualitative rhetorical-critical perspective. Of tremendous benefit would be the ability to assess the vast written messages of the organization such as memos, employee newsletters, annual reports, policy manuals, and external communication on television, radio, and in print (Barnett, 1988). Analysis of day-to-day internal communication sources such, as organizational email messages could also be included. Komsky (1991) asserts that in organizations, which are geographically dispersed over multi-acre sites, face-to-face communication is often replaced by computer-mediated interaction. The university in the current study fits that description. A more detailed picture of the organization could be constructed through the identification of key words and language patterns generated from a quantitative analysis of the organization's broader written messages.

Summary

The purpose of the current study was to demonstrate the emergence of organization in discourse and the linking of conversation to the organizing properties of a network. Chapter One stated the problem, defined the terms, and discussed the significance of the study. Chapter Two reviewed the relevant literature concerning organizational culture and organizational communication. Chapter Three presented the method by which the current study was conducted. The results of the study were presented in Chapter Four. Lastly, Chapter Five discussed the results of the study, including limitations of the study and implications for future research.

Participants in the current study engaged in an ongoing negotiation of perspectives producing a more or less agreed-upon interpretation of organization. They created a

reformulation of their organization, through communication, by expanding the division's mission, establishing core values and identifying key result areas. Additionally, they amplified each key result area linking the emerging mission statement to the organizing properties of the university as a whole.

The theory proposed by Taylor et al. (1996) and the current study maintains communication is the essential ingredient in the constitution of organization. The result is a general model that explains communication and also generates a model of organization. The theory is uniquely communicational and it presents a structure of text and conversational exchange that ultimately provide structure to the social universe of organizations.

APPENDIX A
PRE-SESSION WORKSHEET

Pre-Session Worksheet

This worksheet is an exercise to get our minds working creatively before the session. There are no dumb ideas; nothing is silly or impossible. Try to generate as many responses as you can. Be visionary. Have fun!

Question #1:

As it exists today, how would you describe Business Services?

Question #2:

When you think of Business Services, 5 years into the future, what words, phrases, descriptors come to mind? (Think large, out of the box, the only limitation is your imagination!)

Question #3:

While still thinking about what we might become in 5 years, what already exists that will help us get to our desired future?

Question #4:

What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?

APPENDIX B
DEFINITIONS

Definitions

Vision Statement – an image of what we want to be or become – a statement that declares our desired future state.

Mission Statement – a compelling statement of what our charge is and how we expect to accomplish it – a statement that addresses customers and customer satisfaction.

Core Values Statement – a statement that captures the critical few values essential to the accomplishment of our mission and the fulfillment of our vision.

Key Result Areas – the critical few areas of action that must be kept in mind as we carry out our mission during the next operating period.

APPENDIX C
POST-SESSION WORKSHEET

Post-Session Worksheet

Now that we have completed the session, please share any thoughts you have on the original questions. Again, there are no dumb ideas; nothing is silly or impossible.

Try to generate as many responses as you can. Be visionary. Have fun!

Question #1:

As it exists today, how would you describe Business Services?

Question #2:

How would you describe Business Services 5 years from now?

Question #3:

While still thinking about what we might become in 5 years, what already exists that will help us get to our desired future?

Question #4:

What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?

APPENDIX D
BUSINESS SERVICES TODAY AND TOMORROW

Business Services Today and Tomorrow

To help us understand your perception of Business Services today and in the future, please respond to the following questions. As you answer, think of your area (housing, dining, printing services, coliseum, university union etc.)

Question #1:

As it exists today, how would you describe Business Services?

Question #2:

When you think of Business Services, 5 years into the future, what words, phrases, descriptors come to mind? (Think large, out of the box, the only limitation is your imagination!)

Question #3:

While still thinking about what we might become in 5 years, what already exists that will help us get to our desired future?

Question #4:

What exists now that will hinder us in our efforts to get to our desired future?

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